



CAREGIVING
RELATIONSHIPS
For People Who Care For Adults

A Program Implemented by the
Wisconsin Alliance for Family
Caregiving with Community Partners
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/caregiving/>

Maneuvering Through the Social Service Maze

Objectives:

- Caregivers will be able to locate social service agencies in any community.
- Caregivers will understand the steps to assess what services are needed for the care receiver.
- Caregivers will learn tips on how to best communicate with social service agency representatives, the older adult, and family members.

Discussion:

Have the caregiver identify emotions he is experiencing at this time. Is he in the denial stage? Are there feelings of panic, fear or anger?

Encourage complete honesty and encourage him not to feel guilty about expressing true feelings.

Introduction

If you have recently begun caring for a dependent adult, you may feel many emotions. With the many responsibilities that you face in your own life, you may find that there is no extra time for caregiving. Since families are increasingly mobile, you may be one of the seven million people caregiving or managing care for an older person while living a considerable distance away. Setting up eldercare services can be time consuming and exhausting. It is important for the caregiver to remember that she can't fix everything and to be realistic when finding resources and making a plan.

Caregivers may become frustrated because they don't know how to locate the services. Most communities have a network of services available, but there are no magic numbers to call.

The best choices are made when you take into consideration:

- The circumstances and wishes of the care-receiver and your family. Be realistic about what care-receivers and family members can do.
- The layout of the care-receiver's home and the proximity to needed services.
- The care-receiver's independence and autonomy. It is important that he feels empowered and a part of the decision making.

- The financial and legal aspects, which vary from state to state. Be familiar with the care-receiver's legal and financial status before setting up services.
- Informal support systems. Do not underestimate the network of friends and family.
- The financial and legal aspects, which vary from state to state. Be familiar with the care-receiver's legal and financial status before setting up services.

There are many Eldercare services available and many sources from which to learn about these services. The Aging Network assists older adults and their caregivers, through national, state, and local organizations, such as the:

- National Eldercare Locator Service
- Wisconsin Bureau of Aging & Long Term Care Resources
- Area Agencies on Aging
- County/Tribal Aging Units
- Local Senior Service providers

Other sources of information can be found by contacting:

- Hospital/nursing-home discharge planners
- Other caregivers
- Senior centers
- Health care professionals
- Support groups
- Phone book
- Case managers
- Parish nurses/clergy
- Educational organizations
- Information & Assistance Specialists
- Benefits specialists
- Aging Resource Center
- Commission on Aging
- Local UW-Extension offices

Types of Eldercare services include:

- Adult day care
- Homemaker services
- Home delivered meals/congregate meal services
- Senior dining
- Benefits counseling
- Respite care
- Home health care
- Transportation
- Medical equipment suppliers
- Senior Centers
- Information and assistance
- Senior subsidized housing

- Assisted living
 - Retirement villages
 - Care/case managers
 - Nursing facilities
 - Legal assistance
 - Caregiver advisory specialists
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Activity:

Describe the following scenario:

You are one of three children who is planning for your parent's care. What would be your first step in doing this? Could you count on your siblings to help or to complicate the situation? Have each caregiver list the top priorities in choosing care.

Without a caregiving plan, decisions are made without knowing the resources available when a crisis occurs.

According to the University of Wisconsin-Extension Service, there are several steps in selecting community resources:

- Carefully examine the person's situation, the barriers to independent living. Get input from family, friends, and the care receiver. A family meeting is a good opportunity to gather this information.
- List the formal/informal supports used and available. Compare this information with the needs.
- Locate resources by contacting local aging offices, county/tribal aging units.
- Use a separate sheet of paper for each contact and record the name, number, address, and name and title of the person spoken to.
- Collect the same information from each contact such as services provided, fees, private insurance or sliding scale, eligibility requirements, if there is an application process and how long before services can begin.
- When scheduling appointments, find out what documents will be needed at that time and prepare them ahead.
- Have one family representative handle each area of assistance needed (that is legal, financial, home care, health. This can help avoid confusion.
- Keep all contact information current.
- Keep everyone informed.
- Keep a diary of all contacts made, especially dates and contacts names.

Remember that the ultimate goals of caregiving decisions are to allow the care receiver to be safe, healthy, happy, and independent

Summary

A good way to locate resources for an older adult, especially if you live a distance away from the community, is to call the Eldercare Locator number at 1-800-677-1116. This number will save dozens of calls by identifying the appropriate social service agency to contact in any state.

In Wisconsin, every county and tribe has an aging unit to serve Wisconsin's older residents and their caregivers. Information and Assistance is a service offered by aging units that helps older adults and their families connect with the services they need. County and Tribal Aging Unit staff keep up-to-date information on available services and often have printed service directories to provide to caregivers.

The aging unit is charged with the responsibility of advocating for older adults. Older adults participate in the governance of the aging unit and planning of aging services. To meet an urgent need or to get information that can help planning for the future, contact your local county or tribal aging unit. These aging units are often referred to as Commission on Aging, Aging Resource Center, Department on Aging or Council, or some similar name.

For More Information:

Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregiving
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/caregiving/>

Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources
1 W. Wilson Street, Room 450
Post Office Box 7851
Madison, WI 53707-7851
608/266/2536
608/267-3203 Fax
608/267-9880 TTY
<http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/aging>

Eldercare Locator
1-800-677-1116
<http://www.eldercare.gov>
Monday-Friday 9:00AM-8:00PM

Your local University of Wisconsin Extension office
<http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/cty/>

References:

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